

Wisconsin Dairy Farm

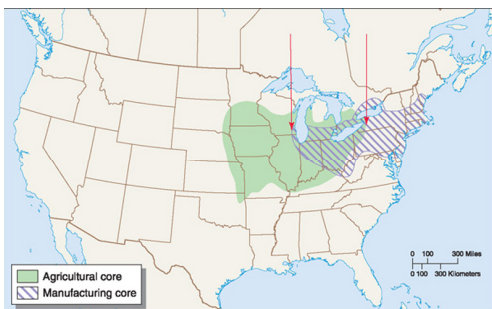


“The Agricultural Core”

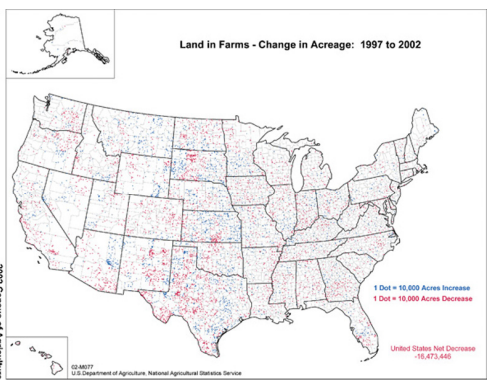
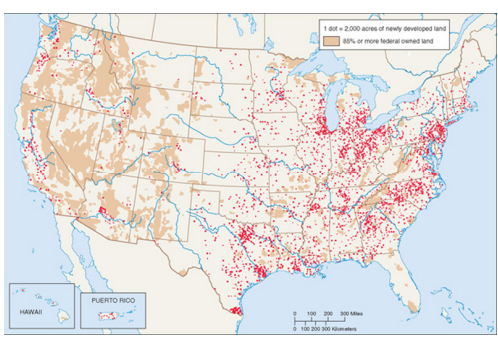
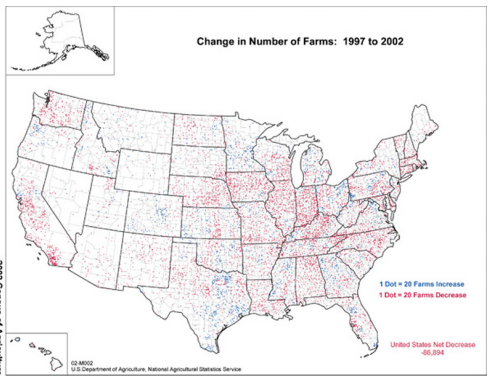
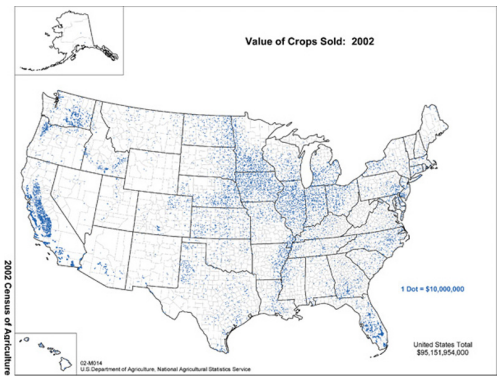
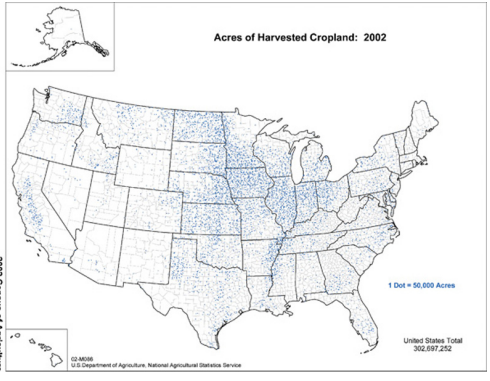
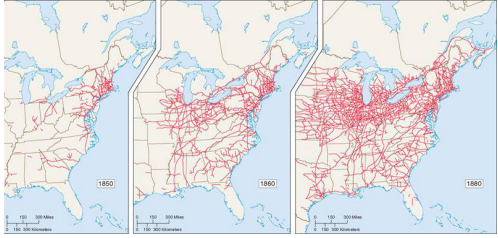
- A relatively old area of persistently high and diverse agricultural activity.
- A scope and scale that has proved permanent despite significant competition for land from growing urban centers and manufacturing.
- The country's preeminent center of agricultural innovation.

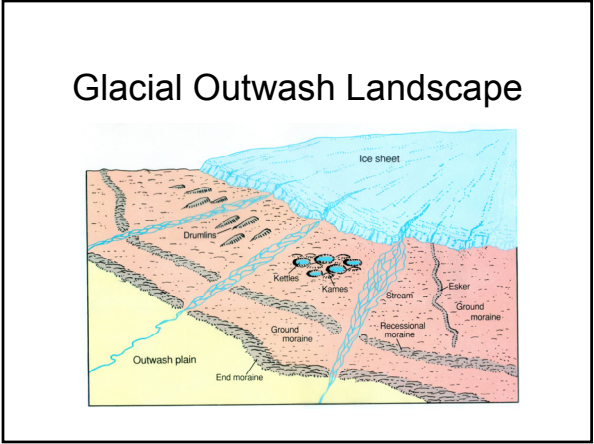
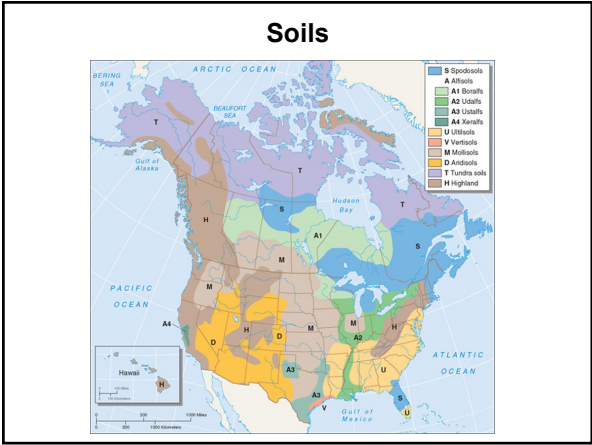
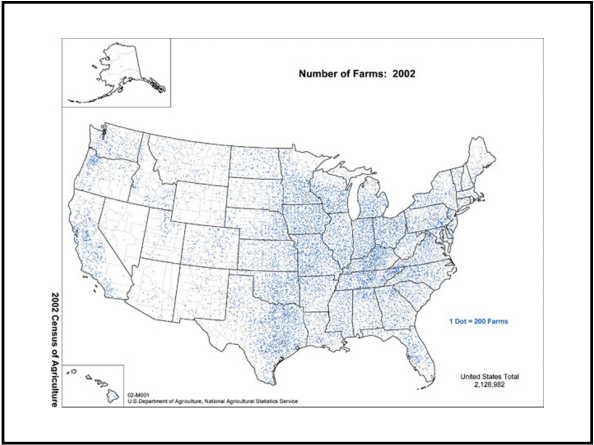
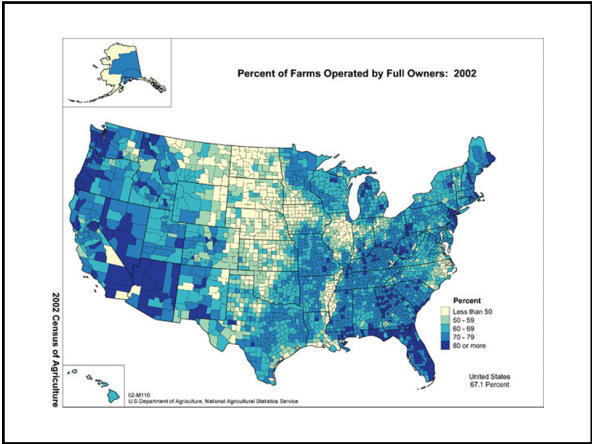
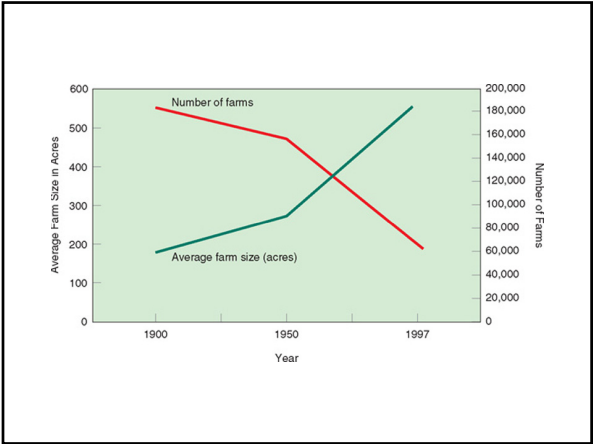
About the region . . .

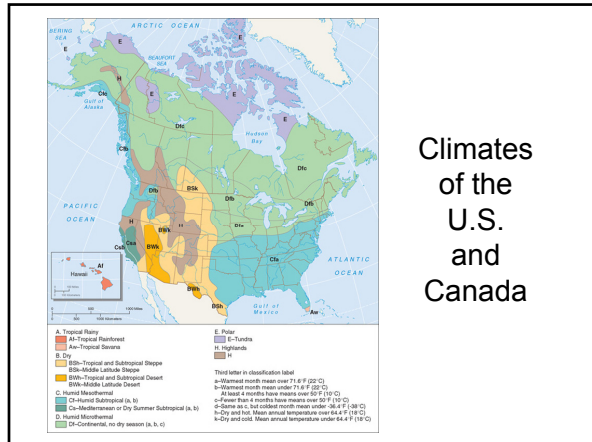
- An overwhelmingly rural, agrarian character derived from early settlers from Northern and Central Europe.
- Ample rainfall and growing season.
- A large economic hinterland afforded by excellent transportation systems – especially as regards connections to large cities.
- A relatively homogenous landscape afforded by the Congressional Survey System and the growing of corn.
- Growth of corporate agriculture at the expense of the family farm.



Railroads in the Eastern U.S., 1850-1880





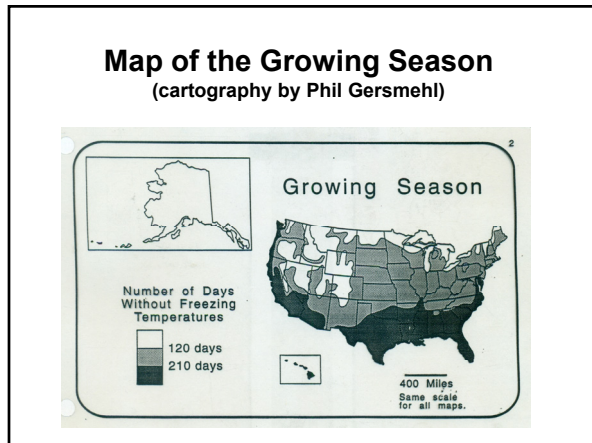


The humid continental climate is a mid-latitude climate with warm to hot (and often humid) summers, and cold (sometimes severely cold) winters. At least one month averages below freezing, while at least 4 months average above 50° F.

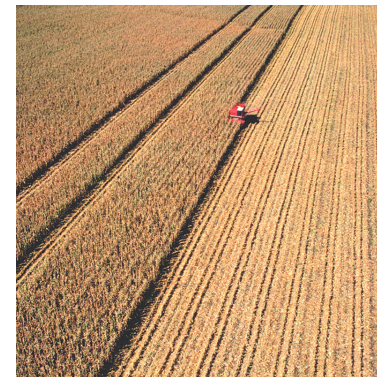
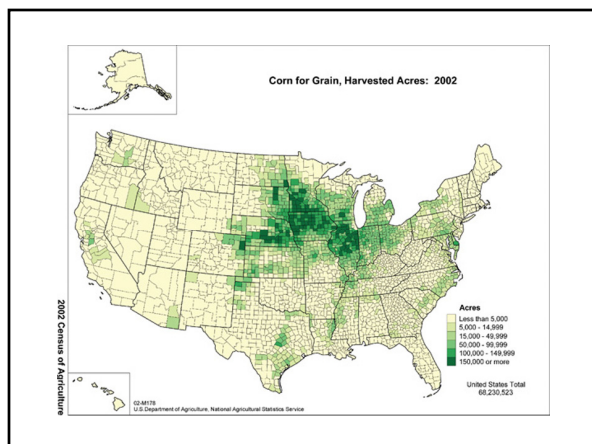
Precipitation is relatively well-distributed year-round. Snowfall may be more common than rain during winter, when deep accumulations may occur.

“Humid” means that the climate is not dry enough to be classified semi-arid or arid. Most summer rainfall occurs during thunderstorms.

Ideal for crops with short growing seasons (grasses, legumes, vegetables).

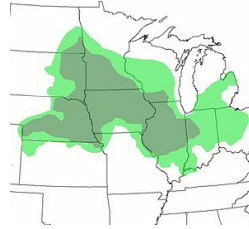


Corn (intermediate growing season)





The Corn Belt



- A region in the Midwest where corn has been the dominant crop since the 1850s, replacing tall natural grasses
- Since 1950, almost entirely hybrid corn.
- Most ends up as feed for livestock, especially hogs and chickens.
- Growing use for ethanol
- U.S. produces about 40% of world corn crop.
- Increasingly complemented by soy beans.

Hybrid Corn (center) vs. Earlier Varieties



Hybrid corn field

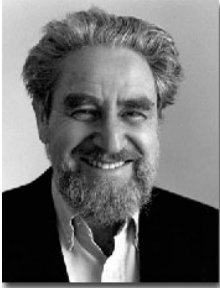


Corn Harvesting in the Midwest



Inspecting ears of hybrid seed corn, Rainbeck, Iowa, Sept. 1939.
Photo by Arthur Rothstein for the FSA.

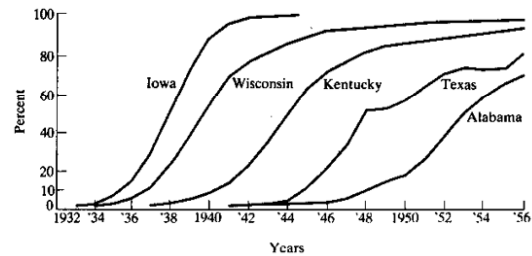
Zvi Grilches (1930-1999)



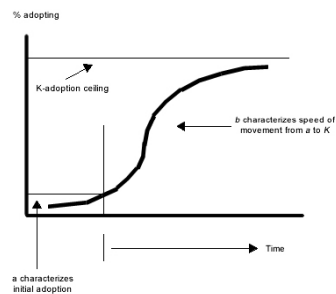
Holocaust survivor who became a leading international expert on the economic impact of technological innovation.

His doctoral dissertation (U. of Chicago, 1957) on the diffusion of hybrid corn in the U.S. is considered in classic in many fields, including cultural geography.

Diffusion of hybrid corn in several states



The S-shaped adoption curve



No tillage agriculture:

A relatively new agricultural technology in which the soil is disked (as opposed to plowed), thus preserving soil moisture. This allows crop rows and the plants within them to be more closely spaced, thereby increasing productivity.

A vintage walking plow



Plowing in Michigan (date unknown)



Plowing with early-model tractor



Tractor with multiple plows



No tillage agriculture



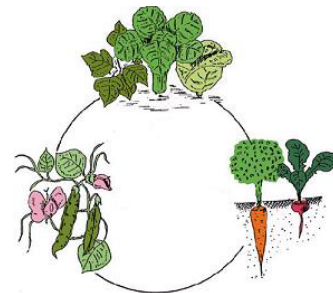
Crop rotation is the practice of growing different crops in a given field in sequential seasons.

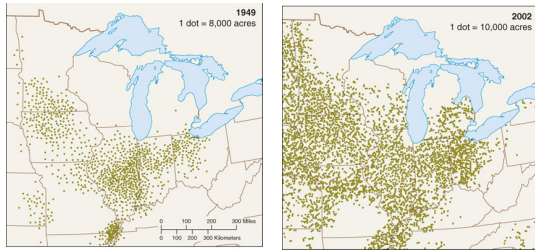
Principal purpose is to maintain nutrient balance in the soil, particularly (in the Midwest) as regards nitrogen.

Also helps avoid build-up of pathogens and pests.

Can help improve soil structure by varying deep-rooted and shallow-rooted plants.

Crop rotation on a hypothetical farm





The Corn-Soybean Belt (a.k.a., the corn-soybean complex)

- Reflects the fact that the complementary growing of corn and soybeans in a 2-year rotation has now become standard in the area traditionally called the “corn belt.”
- Corn is a heavy consumer of soil nitrogen.
- Soybean plants, in contrast, are “nitrogen fixers,” meaning that they return much more nitrogen to the soil than they consume.
- Thus, their rotation promotes soil fertility.
- Both crops are valuable, having a variety of uses.

Midwestern soy bean field



Soy beans



Strip cropping
and
contour
plowing

A region of farms devoted to polyculture (the growing of more than one crop on a given farm) instead of monoculture (the growing of a single crop on a given farm).

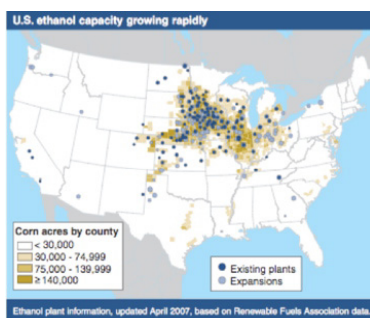
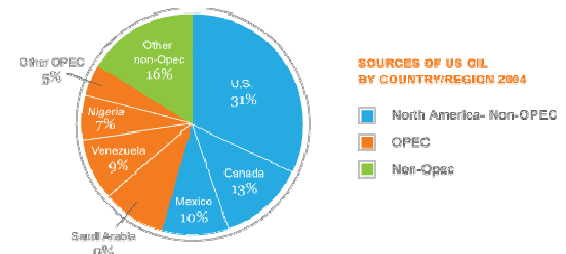
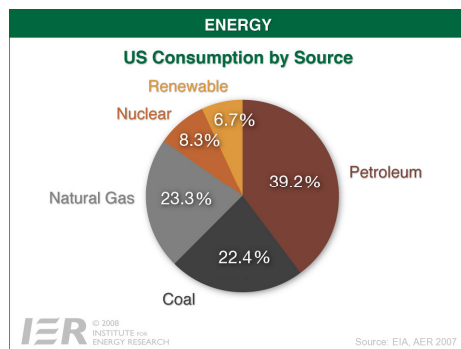
Agricultural issues in the region

- Reduction of species (biological simplification)
- Use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides
- Conversion of harvests from food to fuel
- Federal farm/crop subsidies
- Treatment of livestock
- Disposal of animal wastes
- Farm consolidation → fewer people required to do agricultural work → outmigration → fewer customers/declining buying power for local stores → economically depressed towns losing people and jobs

Ethanol production plant

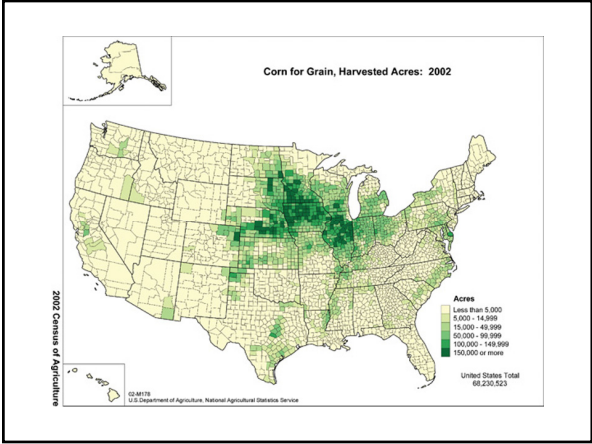
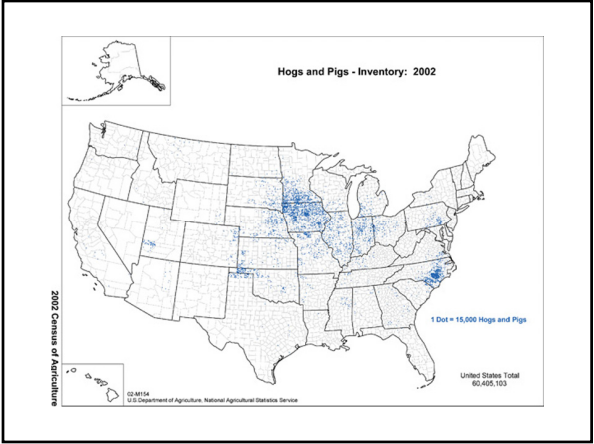
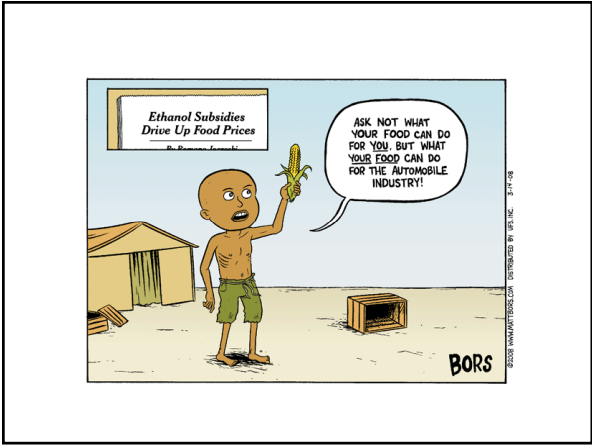
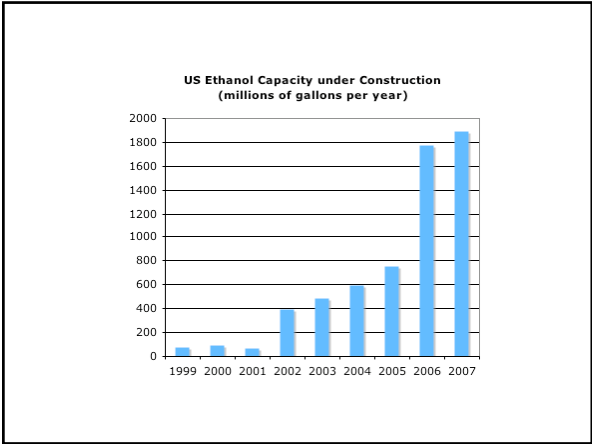
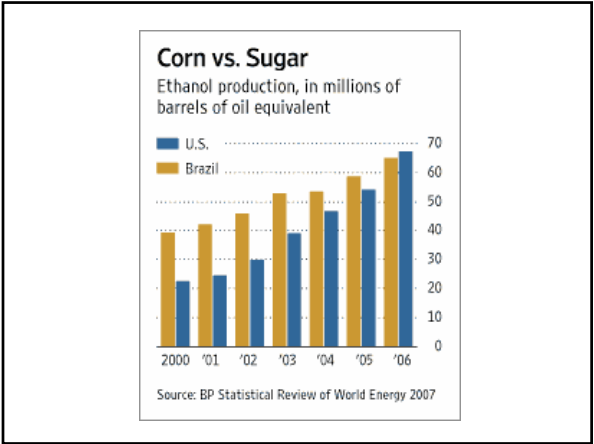


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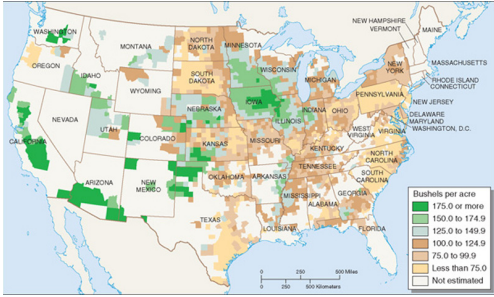


Ground-up corn about to be processed into ethanol





Use of corn for animal feed



Iowa hog farm



Iowa hog farm



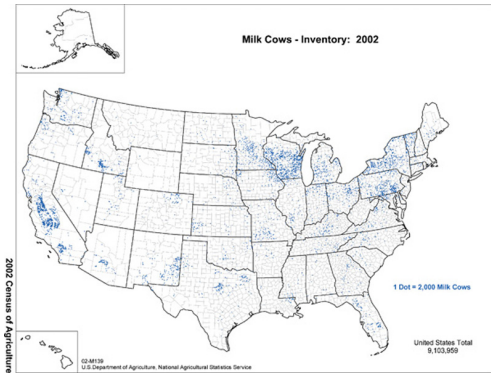
**Industrial hog farm,
Camden, Iowa**



Iowa road sign



Organic family-run hog farm



Wisconsin Dairy Farm

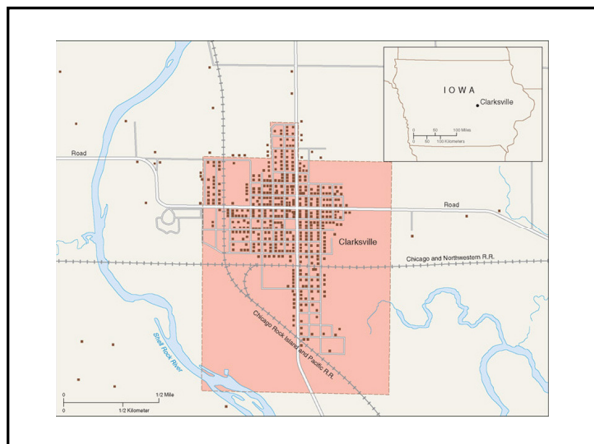
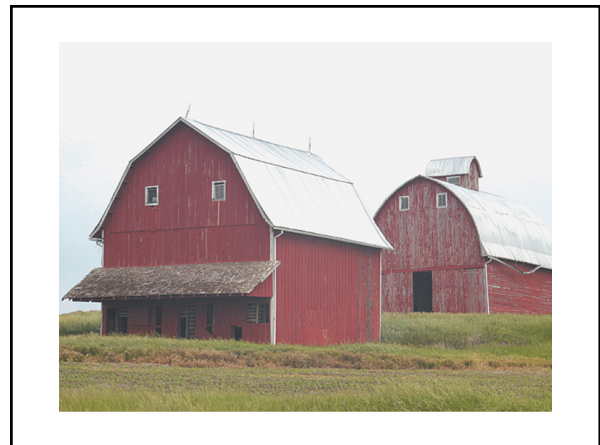
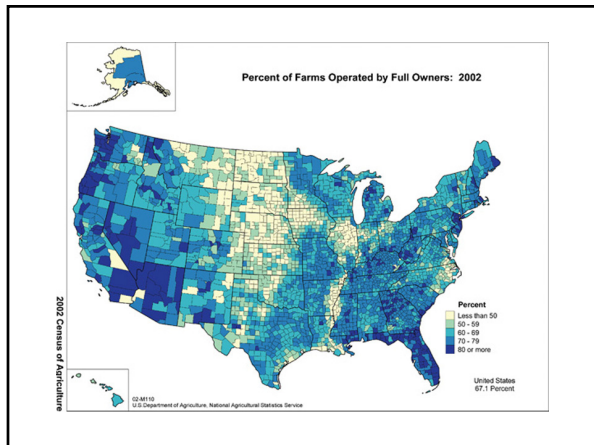
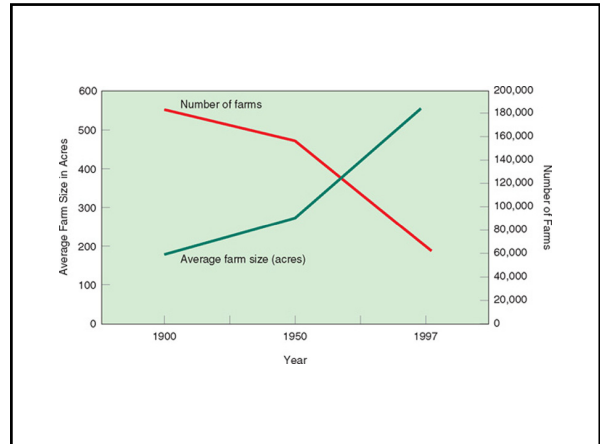
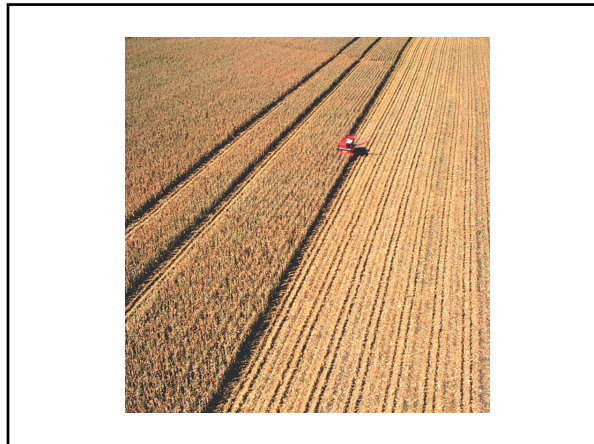


Wisconsin Dairy Farm



Dairying is very well suited to the *humid continental climate* because the guaranteed low temperatures result in annual grasses (which are very succulent and digestible to milk cows) instead of perennial grasses (which are much less digestible).

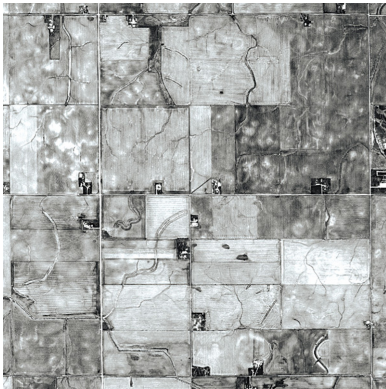




Theme town - a settlement (usually a small- to medium-sized town) that has adopted a certain motif so as to evoke a different time and place for the purpose of attracting tourists.

- Most have a well-established ethnic identity
- Often a response to a downturn in the town's traditional economic base
- Characterized by affected facades and folk architecture, ethnic dress; ethnic food; ethnic music; ethnic signs and language; ethnic festivals; ethnic gift items; ethnic . . .

Holland, Michigan



These all refer to the same thing:

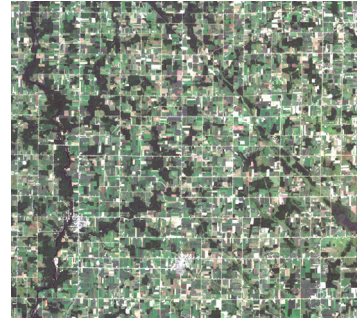
**Public Land Survey System
Congressional Survey System
Township and Range System
Grid Survey System**

Lands affected by The Northwest Ordinance of 1787





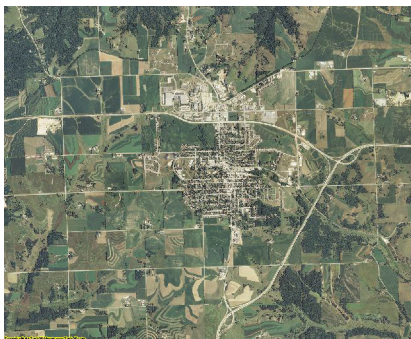
A portion of southern Wisconsin



Central Kansas

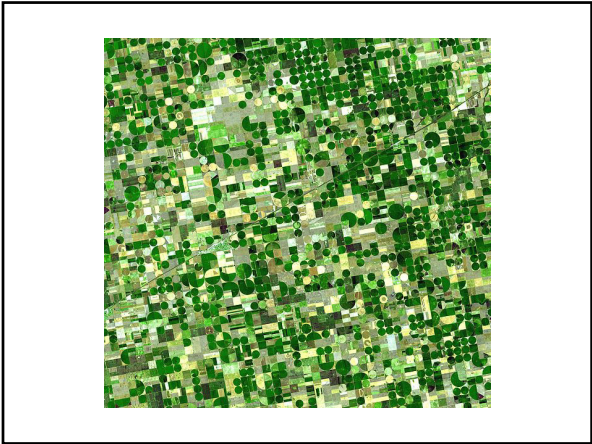


Sedgewick, KS



Farm land in Canyon County, Idaho





Chicago at sunset, looking west

